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Shaina M. Ervin
Georgia State University

Beth Cianfrone
Georgia State University, bcianfrone@gsu.edu

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EXPLORING THE WORK-LIFE BALANCE OF INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETIC GRADUATE ASSISTANTS: A PRELIMINARY STUDY OF WORK-EXTRACURRICULAR CONFLICT

Shaina Ervin¹ and Beth A. Cianfrone²

¹Ohio State University

²Georgia State University

ABSTRACT

Intercollegiate athletics are a popular and competitive field, with employees drawn to a dynamic, yet untraditional work environment with varying work hours. The struggle of achieving work-life balance has received considerable study in sport, as employees often find a conflict in balancing their job and other life responsibilities, such as family (work-family conflict). This chapter introduces a new area of potential employee internal conflict, work-extracurricular conflict, which encompasses everything outside of work and family, such as spiritual, hobbies, exercise/health, school, and social activities. This conflict may be especially relevant to a segment of the industry which is rarely studied, intercollegiate athletic department graduate assistants (GAs). GAs may have more conflict with making time for schoolwork, friends, and hobbies rather than family. This exploratory chapter intends to: (1) introduce the concept of work-extracurricular conflict, and (2) preliminarily assess work-life balance in non-coaching GAs (e.g., marketing, sports information, ticketing) and their supervisors by comparing their levels of conflict (work-family, work-extracurricular) and satisfaction (life and job). Data were collected from GAs and their supervisors ($N = 47$) working in five athletic departments via a 27-item online survey. Descriptive statistics and t-tests revealed significant differences between GAs and supervisors in job satisfaction, while determining no significant differences in work-family conflict, work-extracurricular conflict, or life satisfaction levels. Both GAs and supervisors experienced conflict on both the family and extracurricular levels, suggesting managers should focus on improving these areas of conflict. Sport managers can utilize this information to better understand the work-life balance of GAs and establish dialogue on ways to improve GAs' experiences in hopes of retaining these professionals in the future. Finally, researchers should investigate the new construct of work-extracurricular conflict, validate the scale, and consider policies for staff to alleviate conflict.

INTRODUCTION

Within the sport industry, college athletics are a popular and expanding segment. In 2011-2012, the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) generated about \$871 million (NCAA, 2013). Despite the economic growth, there is an increasing concern involving the challenge for sport professionals to successfully manage work and non-work domains. This concern stems from sport professionals leaving their jobs due to the culture of the industry, which demands a high degree of time commitment (Schenewark & Dixon, 2012; Wong, 2012). Employees often work long, nontraditional work hours, including nights and weekends, and with advancement in communication technology, there is an expectation of employees being accessible 24/7, consequently blurring the line between work and home.

Work-life balance has received considerable study in sport, primarily from a conflict perspective (Bruening & Dixon, 2007; Dixon & Bruening, 2005; Dixon & Bruening, 2007; Dixon & Sagas, 2007; Greenhaus & Buetell, 1985; Greenhaus & Powell, 2006; Schenewark & Dixon, 2012). Most commonly labeled work-family conflict this term is used when work interferes with family and may be used to assess work-life balance. Although this measure is reliable and valid (Netemeyer, Boles, & McMurrian, 1996), it neglects a portion of the workforce, those without family, who may experience a different type of conflict.

This chapter attempts to narrow the gap in understanding the conflicts present for employees, with and without family, by introducing a new conceptual construct, labeled work-extracurricular conflict. The word “extracurricular” has been operationalized to encompass everything outside of work and family (i.e., spiritual, hobbies, exercise/health, school, and social). One demographic this conflict may affect is intercollegiate athletic department graduate assistants (GAs).

Intercollegiate athletic GAs are valuable members of college athletic departments. GAs are needed to fill lower level staff roles in all facets of the departments (e.g., advising, development, marketing, ticketing, administration, sports information, coaching). Graduate assistantships are mutually beneficial for the student and the organization. GAs earn their master's degree, acquire practical industry experience, while providing work comparable to full time-employees without the salary cost. They must attempt to manage their full-time studies, work, and outside activities, in addition to possibly a family. GAs may experience conflict with finding time for these elements of their life. Thus, there is a need to advance work-life balance research in sport.

Work-life balance has been studied from a coaching (Bruening & Dixon, 2007; Dixon & Bruening, 2005, 2007) and an internship perspective (Cunningham, Sagas, Dixon, Kent, & Turner, 2005). Despite advances in research on work-life in sport, to date, no research has assessed intercollegiate athletic GAs' and supervisors' work-life balance. Therefore, this chapter explores the work-life balance of GAs and their supervisors from a conflict (work-family, work-extracurricular) and satisfaction (job and life) perspective (Figure 1). Work-life balance may impact employees' success, job satisfaction, and can be considered as the key driver of an individual's career decision (Chawla & Sondhi, 2011), thus it is imperative sport professionals understand the work-life balance of GAs in hopes of keeping them in the industry long-term.

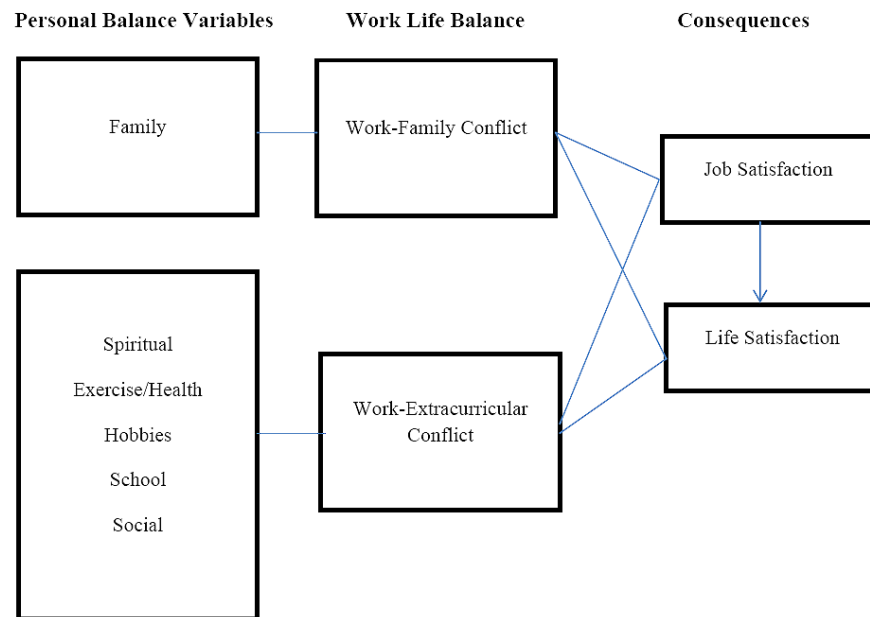


Figure 1. Work-Life Balance Framework.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The Sport Industry Lifestyle

Intercollegiate athletic staff members must work around schedule constraints, which often call for night and weekend games. This can lead to long hours and little time off (Wong, 2012). The time commitment required in athletics, especially in college athletic departments, presents a challenge for the work-family experience, often creating conflict and a struggle for balance. For example, coaching is known to not be an exceedingly family-friendly profession because the job responsibilities from games, practices, recruiting, and administrative duties cultivates thriving in coaching as those willing to work 12 hour days, six days a week and 50 weeks per year (Knoppers, 1992). Despite the sports industry's nontraditional culture, those who are passionate about sports are drawn to work in the field, making it a highly competitive industry. However, the number of those interested in working in the sport industry is greater than the number of available positions (Wong, 2012). One way to earn a competitive advantage for breaking into the sport industry is by obtaining a master's degree and working as a GA.

The Role of GAs

GAs are defined as "full-time graduate students who provide service to the university in exchange for a stipend and, in some cases, additional benefits, such as tuition waivers and health insurance" (White & Nonamaker, 2011, p. 45). GA positions are intended to be closely

aligned with students' professional goals in an effort to give them experience within the field they want to work, and jointly, provide valuable service to the college or university (White & Nonamaker, 2011). GAs are employed by many divisions within a university, including its athletic department. The steady rise of sport management graduate programs has created an increase of students looking for professional experience, while continuing their education. Typically, assistantship positions are two years in length, allowing students to have major responsibilities within the organization, as they work towards completing their degrees. GA positions are very similar to internships as they allow students to be a part of the experiential learning process seen as critical to their ultimate career success (Cunningham et al., 2005). One major difference is that GA positions require graduate students to balance a full academic load along with their employment for a two year period, whereas internships are typically the final semester without class load. GAs are often required to work 20 hours a week for their respective departments and manage a full time class load. The demands of athletics lend to GAs exceeding these hours because many GAs have to work the sporting events, in addition to preparing for them. It is unclear if these demands lessen as the staff member promotes to a higher position or if this experience prevents people from continuing into the field.

There have been very few studies assessing GAs' roles in sport. Dunn and Dunn (1997) observed the graduate assistant coach's (GAC) experiences as it relates to role theory. Despite the numerous roles of GACs, Dunn and Dunn (1997) determined the experience gained as a GAC was extremely important to the career development of those who aim to become full-time coaches. Research suggests there may be role conflicts for GAs who are not in a coaching position (Mazerolle, Dixon & Casa, 2008; Werbel & Danes, 2010). To date there have been no studies exploring GAs' work-life balance in sport.

The Role of the Supervisor

GAs are typically supervised by a full-time staff member. This may add to the workload of supervisors, as they will have additional responsibilities of mentoring and delegating to the GA. Feldman, Folks, and Turnley (1999) expressed the supervisors (mentors) overseeing interns are critical to interns' work lives. Often, supervisors determine the types of tasks assigned and are responsible for evaluating interns' performances for future recruitment decisions. However, the supervisor may have less work because they have a GA support. Therefore, GA supervisors' work-life balance may be lessened or improved because of the GA. This is unclear, making it important to study supervisors' work-life balance.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Work-Life Balance and Work-Family Conflict Theory

Organizations are often concerned with employee production, optimizing their efficiency and potential, retaining employees through job satisfaction, and their loyalty to the organization. According to Aon Consulting (2000), 88% of employees say they have a hard time juggling work and life. This is critical as Hobson, Delunas and Kesic (2001) explained

that corporate employees' chronic inability to balance work and family responsibilities can lead to higher rates of absenteeism and turnover, reduced productivity, decreased job satisfaction, lower levels of organizational loyalty, and rising healthcare costs. Similarly, studies show work-life balance can impact productivity (Bloom, Kretschmer, & Van Reenen, 2006; White, Hill, McGovern, Mills, & Smeaton, 2003). In 1986, work-life balance was first used to describe the trend of individuals spending more time on work and less time on other aspects of their lives (Lockwood, 2003). For the purpose of this exploratory chapter, work-life balance is defined as "people spending sufficient time at their jobs while also spending adequate time on other pursuits, such as family, friends, and hobbies" (Smith, 2010, p. 434). Work-life balance is the umbrella under which potential conflict falls. It is assumed if an individual has work-life balance, conflict will not exist. The sport industry has primarily examined the conflict perspective of work and family as a way to assess work-life balance. To date, there are no studies on GAs' work-life balance in sport. GAs are not shielded from feeling the struggle to balance work and non-work responsibilities.

Conflict Perspective

The conflict perspective of work-life balance involves both conflict between work and family. Specifically, work-family conflict is when work interferes with family and family-work conflict is when family interferes with work. This conflict is defined as "a type of interrole conflict wherein at least some work and family responsibilities are not compatible and have resultant effects on each domain" (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985, p. 77). Interrole conflict occurs when an individual cannot successfully manage multiple life roles simultaneously. These roles could include fulfilling responsibilities as an employee, student, mother, father, spouse, and partner. It is assumed if an individual lacks balance between work and life domains, conflict will exist. Much of the literature regarding the interaction of work and life is based in a conflict perspective (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). A growing number of scholars have demonstrated an interest in the conflict between work and non-work realms in sport (Dixon & Bruening, 2005, 2007; Dixon & Sagas, 2007; Greenhaus & Buetell, 1985; Greenhaus & Powell, 2006; Schenewark & Dixon, 2012). Research indicates that work-family conflict may contribute to employees leaving their organizations (Anderson, Coffey & Byerly, 2002) and this conflict would have a significant bearing on the work-life balance of a professional (Hobson et al., 2001). Consequently, it is significant to study work-family conflict when assessing work-life balance. A lack of balance between work and life may lead to a high level of work-family conflict. It is important to determine the impact of work-family conflict within a sport industry setting.

Jobs in the sport industry can be linked to high levels of working hours, stress and pressure and studies indicate that jobs that are higher in pressure and stress are associated with higher work-family conflict and have been linked to lower job satisfaction (Dixon & Bruening, 2005). In an effort to study work-family conflict, Dixon and Bruening (2005) integrated three theoretical approaches: individual, structural, and social relations. These are identified as "top-down" and a "bottoms' up" approaches. Applying these theories within a sports setting they found perception and consequences of work-family conflict is greatly impacted by higher level factors (social and organizational), and constrain the lower level factors (organizational and individual). Dixon and Bruening (2007) extended their

investigation of the multilevel framework from their integrated approach study and observed work-family conflict in NCAA Division I coaching mothers from a “top-down” perspective. They found that the factors on all three levels of their framework affected the mothers coaching experiences and job satisfaction.

There are many constructs that influence work-life and work-family balance. Demographic and individual factors include: gender, personality, values, family size; and organizational variables including: organizational culture, support, job pressure, work hours, and flextime (Bruening & Dixon, 2007). Bruening and Dixon (2007) analyzed coping mechanism used to achieve success in juggling work and family. Similar to their previous study, they observed mothers who are NCAA Division I head coaches. They concluded work-family conflict did affect three major areas: work, family, and life. Constant with Dixon and Bruening (2007) findings with their sample of female college coaches, a study that examined the work-family conflict in NCAA Division I-A athletic trainers found that no matter the marital or family status, trainers at the Division I level experienced difficulties balancing their work and home lives (Mazerolle, Bruening, & Casa, 2008). In addition, when studying work-family conflict and work-family enrichment in collegiate coaches, Schenewark and Dixon (2012) found that work-family enrichment was not significant to career commitment but work-family conflict was significant in predicting career commitment. For individuals, interactions between work and family can result in positive outcomes such as enhanced job satisfaction, family satisfaction, and life satisfaction. Yet, there can also be negative outcomes such as reduced job satisfaction, conflict, poor health, stress, and job turnover (Dixon & Bruening, 2007). In regards to work-family conflict, supervisors are typically older, are more established in their career, and may have had more time to start a family and thus more conflict. Although GAs may be living with family, the potential impact of work-family conflict is expected to be higher in supervisors.

Hypothesis 1: GAs will have low levels of work-family conflict

Hypothesis 2: Supervisors will have high levels of work-family conflict

Hypothesis 3: GAs will have lower levels of work-family conflict than their supervisors

Work-Extracurricular Conflict

The importance of assessing work-family conflict has been established. However, the research may be missing a large segment of employees, those without family. Previous research has labeled conflict areas as work-life conflict. Work-life conflict is defined as “a particular type of inter-role conflict in which pressures from the work role are incompatible with the pressures from the [life outside of work] role” (Thomas & Ganster, 1995, p. 7). The label of “life” is broad and unspecific.

In an effort to better understand why some individuals may have little work-family conflict, yet still unsatisfied with their jobs, another area of conflict may exist. Thus, a new construct introduced is work-extracurricular conflict. The word “extracurricular” has been operationalized for this chapter to encompass everything outside of work and family. Extracurricular includes spiritual, hobbies, exercise/health, school, and social. While work-family conflict is specific to family, some staff members, such as GAs, may not have families, but rather they could be focused early in their career on establishing social

connections or creating a balance in their lives. GAs could be married or live close to family, yet some GAs may be more concerned that there is no time for other aspects of life, such as school, socializing, or exercise. Therefore, if GAs do not feel there is enough time to balance work and extracurricular activities, work-extracurricular conflict could exist. Also, it is expected for GAs to have higher levels of conflict with balancing other aspects of their lives than their supervisors. This chapter introduces the new construct of work-extracurricular conflict.

Hypothesis 4: GAs will have higher levels of work-extracurricular conflict compared to their supervisors

Job Satisfaction Theory

According to the 2012 Employee Job Satisfaction and Engagement report presented by the Society for Human Resource Management, when employees were asked how important flexibility is to balance work and life issues, nearly one-half (46%) of employees rated it as very important to their overall job satisfaction (SHRM, 2012). There is a growing debate on whether a satisfied employee is a productive employee and the study of job satisfaction is at the center of the debate. The spillover model is used to characterize United States employees, explaining that job satisfaction spills into life satisfaction and vice versa (Judge & Watanabe, 1994). The most-used research definition of job satisfaction is by Locke (1976), who defined job satisfaction as “a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one’s job or job experiences” (p. 1304). Working individuals find themselves struggling to juggle the competing demands of work and family and the excessive pressure and scarcity of free time may adversely affect their ability to cope (Anafarta, 2011). This conflict has an impact on job satisfaction, which can impact employees’ decisions to stay or leave their jobs. Subsequently, job satisfaction is seen as a key component of this chapter.

The sport industry is nontraditional and produces a high level of pressure and time commitment, so it is valuable that sport organizations improve their employees’ job satisfaction, because this largely correlates with their work-life balance. From the literature, low job satisfaction is related to professionals leaving their job. Sagas and Batista (2001) found as job satisfaction increased, a coach’s intent to leave the profession decreased. Sagas and Ashley (2001) examined job satisfaction in the coaching profession and stated the importance of studying job satisfaction to understand turnover in female coaches. Similarly, Chelladuri and Ogasawara (2003) suggested the athletic departments focus on coaches’ satisfaction with their jobs in an effort to keep them within the organization. While much of the job satisfaction literature in sport has focused on a few narrow segments (e.g., coaching, administrators; Whisenant, Pedersen, & Smucker, 2004), job satisfaction of GAs has not been explored. Therefore, it is vital to examine GAs’ job satisfaction.

Hypothesis 5: GAs will have low levels of job satisfaction

Hypothesis 6: Supervisors will have high levels of job satisfaction

Hypothesis 7: GAs will have lower levels of job satisfaction compared to their supervisors

Expectations

Research has reported that career expectations influence employees' organizational commitment and job satisfaction (Buchanan, 1974; Scholl, 1981). That is, if an employee expects the career (e.g. work hours, responsibilities, job roles, work-life balance, and organizational support) to be one way, and in actuality it is another, their expectations do not align, potentially impacting their attitudes towards the career and/or organization. Sibson (2011) examined various factors students studying event, sport and recreation management find important when looking for a career. Understanding the views of graduate students is highly significant when attracting and recruiting the students to the courses. Also, it helps in identifying misconceptions in the career, enabling program staff to portray courses more realistically and, to some extent, prevent future job dissatisfaction. This could be associated with the importance of GAs in intercollegiate athletic departments understanding the sport industry and its demands. If GAs are unaware of the realities of the sport industry, their job satisfaction could be impacted. There is a need to explore GAs future expectations of work-life balance, specifically work-extracurricular conflict, when preparing to enter the sport field full-time.

Hypothesis 8: GAs will expect their work-extracurricular conflict to decrease as they enter the field full-time

METHOD

Participants

To assess work-life balance in intercollegiate athletic GAs and supervisors, Division I athletic department non-coaching GA participants ($n = 27$) and their supervisors ($n = 20$) were recruited via five intercollegiate athletic departments in the Southeast. Of those, 51.1% were males, with the majority of the supervisors were male (75%), but GAs (66.7%) were female. The GA participants (96.4%) were single without children (89.3%). The majority of supervisor respondents were White/Non-Hispanic (60.0%), married (55.0%), and without children (55.0%).

Procedures

To assess work-life balance, work-family conflict, work-extracurricular conflict, job satisfaction, life satisfaction, and expectations of sport industry GAs and their supervisors, participants were identified via university athletic website staff directories. They were e-mailed a request to participate with the survey link including an informed consent form. To prevent from potential bias, the GA information was confidential and not provided to the supervisors. A total of 50 GAs and 32 supervisors were e-mailed the online survey questionnaire. Following the removing five online attempts with incomplete data, the final sample consisted of 47 participants: 27 GAs and 20 supervisors.

Instruments

After a comprehensive review of literature, an original 27 item survey was developed. It was reviewed by a panel of six sport management GAs and four faculty members for face validity and feasibility of the new construct of extracurricular activities and overall readability. The wording was deemed appropriate and a distinction between work-family and work- extracurricular was noted.

Work-Family and Work-Extracurricular Conflict. Work-family conflict was measured using 5-items from the Netemeyer et al.'s (1996) scale. Respondents were asked to rate on a 7-point range (1= *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*); the items were reliable in past studies (e.g., Netemeyer et al., 1996; $\alpha = .88$). The construct of work-extracurricular conflict was created in effort to recognize areas outside of work and family. "Extracurricular" was operationalized to encompass everything outside of work and family, and includes spiritual, hobbies, exercise/health, school and social and a note was made on the survey so participants knew what extracurricular entailed. Slight modifications were made to the Netemeyer et al. (1996) 5-item work-family conflict scale. For example, the original work-family conflict scale asked if "the demands of my work interfere with my home and family life", whereas the modified WEC item became "the demands of my work interfere with my extracurricular activities." Respondents were asked to rate this measure on a 7-point scale (1= *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*).

Job and Life Satisfaction and Expectations. To assess job satisfaction, Cammann, Fichman, Jenkins, and Kelsh's (1983) 3-item scale (1= *strongly dissatisfied* to 7 = *strongly satisfied*) was used. Life satisfaction was measured using a single-item global scale created by Near, Rice, and Hunt (1978) and adapted in Dixon and Warner's (2010) investigation of employee's satisfaction in sport.

Respondents were asked to rate their experience on a 7-point scale (1 = *dissatisfied* and 7 = *very satisfied*). A single-item comparative future statement was included to determine the GAs' expectations of a career in sport ("do you expect your work-extracurricular conflict to decrease when obtaining a position in athletics full-time?").

Demographics. Literature suggests that demographic factors can have an impact on work-family conflict and job satisfaction (Dixon & Sagas, 2007). For both GAs and supervisors, basic demographic information was collected. The GA survey also included five items about the GA position: status of their assistantship (full- or part-time), hours per week working at their GA position, number of course hours taking this semester, occupation/job title, and start date. For supervisors, six items measured related experience: start date with current organization, previous GA experience, number of GAs they supervise, number of hours per week at the job, occupation/job title, and how long they have worked in the sport industry.

Data Analyses

Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), version 18 for Windows was used for all data analysis for this study. Means and standard deviations were calculated for all demographic variables (Table 1). Alpha reliability coefficients were calculated to determine reliability of the questionnaire items.

To analyze the differences between GAs and supervisors in work-family conflict, work-extracurricular conflict, job satisfaction, and life satisfaction, t-tests were conducted (Table 2).

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics for the Personal Background Variables

Background variable	Category	Graduate Assistants (<i>n</i> = 27)		Supervisors (<i>n</i> = 20)	
		<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Gender	Male	9	32.1	15	75.0
	Female	19	67.9	5	25.0
Age (<i>M</i> = 28.93; <i>SD</i> = 8.60)	18-22	4	14.8	0	0.0
	23-27	22	81.4	3	15.8
	28-32	1	3.7	5	26.4
	33-37	0	0.0	3	15.8
	38-42	0	0.0	2	10.6
	43-47	0	0.0	3	15.8
	48-52	0	0.0	1	5.3
	53+	0	0.0	1	5.3
Ethnicity	African-American	8	29.6	2	10.0
	White/Non-Hispanic	13	48.1	12	60.0
	White/Hispanic	5	18.5	3	15.0
	Hispanic/Non-White	0	0.0	3	15.0
	Asian	0	0.0	0	0.0
	Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0	0.0	0	0.0
	Other	1	3.6	0	0.0
Marital Status	Single	27	100.0	8	40.0
	Married	0	0.0	11	55.0
	Divorced	0	0.0	1	5.0
Number of Children	0	24	88.9	11	55.0
	1	1	3.7	5	25.0
	2	0	0.0	4	20.0

Table 2. Work-Life Balance Descriptive Statistics for Graduate Assistants and Supervisors

Variable	α	GAs <i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Supervisors <i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
<i>Work-Family Conflict</i>	.91	3.96	1.47	4.12	1.17
Due to work-related duties, I have to make changes to my plans for family activities.		5.12	1.81	5.55	.99
The demands of my work interfere with my home and family life.		4.30	1.75	4.95	1.14
Things I want to do at home do not get done because of the demands my job puts on me.		3.37	1.57	3.30	1.53
My job produces strain that makes it difficult to fulfill family duties.		3.11	1.42	3.10	1.55
The amount of time my job takes up makes it difficult to fulfill family responsibilities.		3.85	1.77	3.69	1.72
<i>Work-Extracurricular Conflict</i>	.93	4.64	1.47	4.64	1.17
Due to work-related duties, I have to make changes to my plans for extracurricular activities.		5.00	1.59	5.00	.86
The demands of my work interfere with my extracurricular activities.		4.93	1.52	4.60	1.31
Things I want to do outside of the home do not get done because of the demands my job puts on me.		4.04	1.79	4.35	1.31
My job produces strain that makes it difficult to fulfill my extracurricular activities.		4.40	1.67	4.25	1.62
The amount of time my job takes up makes it difficult to fulfill extracurricular responsibilities.		4.81	1.71	5.00	1.41
<i>Job Satisfaction</i>	.90	5.40*	1.11	6.23*	.62
1. In general, I don't like my job. (R)		5.48	1.28	6.50	.69
2. All in all, I am satisfied with my job.		5.44	1.19	5.95	.76
3. In general, I like working here.		5.26	1.16	6.25	.64
<i>Life Satisfaction</i>					
1. Taking everything into consideration, how satisfied are you with life at this point in time?		5.37	1.24	5.65	.88

Note. (R) denotes reverse coded item. *significant ($p < .05$) differences.

RESULTS

Descriptive statistics for demographic variables of the participants are depicted in Table 1. The mean length of time supervisors spent at their current organization was 3.37 years (40.47 months; $SD = 36.69$), and overall time in the sport industry was 13.63 years ($SD = 7.23$). GAs worked an average of 34.80 ($SD = 13.76$) hours per week, while their supervisors worked on average of 56.47 ($SD = 7.11$) hours per week.

The survey sought to uncover how participants work interferences with family. Reliability estimates were good ($\alpha = .91$). The work-family conflict item with the highest rating for GAs ($M = 5.15$; $SD = 1.81$) and supervisors ($M = 5.55$; $SD = 0.99$) was “due to work-related duties, I have to make changes to my plans for family activities.” The mean for GAs’ overall work-family conflict rating was 3.96 ($SD = 1.47$), consequently supporting Hypothesis 1 (Table 2). Hypothesis 2 was concerned with supervisors having high levels of work-family conflict. This was not supported. The mean for supervisors overall work-family conflict rating was at the midpoint of 4.11 ($SD = 1.17$). As Hypothesis 3 predicted, work-family conflict level for supervisors is higher than GAs. This difference, however, was not very large or significant. Independent t-test yielded no significant differences in work-family conflict between GAs and supervisors [$t(45) = -.408$; $p = .69$].

Similar to work-family conflict, descriptive statistics were used to analyze how work interferences with extracurricular activities (Table 2). The five adapted items had appropriate reliability ($\alpha = .93$). GAs ($M = 4.64$; $SD = 1.47$) and supervisors ($M = 4.64$; $SD = 1.17$) rated very similarly in work-extracurricular conflict levels. Hypothesis 4 predicted GAs work-extracurricular conflict to be higher than their supervisors; this was not supported. T-test revealed no significant differences in work-extracurricular conflict between GAs and supervisors [$t(45) = -.005$; $p = .996$].

The reliability estimate for job satisfaction items was appropriate ($\alpha = .90$). Hypothesis 5 predicted job satisfaction levels for GAs to be low. This was not supported, as the average rating for job satisfaction in GAs was above the midpoint ($M = 5.40$; $SD = 1.11$). As Hypothesis 6 projected, supervisors reported high levels of job satisfaction. Hypothesis 7 was supported, as GAs rated significantly lower for overall job satisfaction ($M = 5.40$; $SD = 1.11$) than their supervisors ($M = 6.23$; $SD = .62$). An independent samples t-test was run to determine a difference between GAs and supervisors in job satisfaction. There was a significant difference between the two groups [$t(45) = -3.047$; $p = .004$]. Both GAs ($M = 5.37$; $SD = 1.22$) and supervisors ($M = 5.65$; $SD = .88$) reported to be satisfied with their lives up to this point in time. GAs ($M = 3.67$; $SD = 1.71$) expected their levels of work-extracurricular conflict to not decrease when obtaining a position in athletics full-time, thus refuting Hypothesis 8, which predicted GAs would expect their work-extracurricular conflict to decrease when obtaining a full-time position in athletics.

CONCLUSION

Work-life balance is a growing topic for researchers in sport. The nontraditional working environment and lifestyle of sport breeds a challenge for employees to balance work and non-work responsibilities. It is imperative researchers and sport managers understand work-life balance of their employees, as research shows a lack of balance can impact performance,

satisfaction, turnover, health, organizational loyalty and longevity in the career (Hobson et al., 2001). Research has focused on work-family conflict, but this chapter introduces another area of possible conflict—the elements outside of family, such as time for exercise/health, spiritual, or social activities. Despite careers in sport being assessed from a coaching (Dixon & Bruening, 2005, 2007) and an internship perspective (Cunningham et al., 2005), to date, no research has assessed the work-life balance of intercollegiate athletic GAs and supervisors. GAs are the future sport managers, so they are an important part of a staff to understand. Therefore, this exploratory chapter examined work-life balance by assessing and comparing work-family conflict, job satisfaction, work-extracurricular conflict, life satisfaction, and expectations of sport industry GAs and their supervisors.

Studies on work-life balance in sport are quickly emerging, but research is still limited. Much of the current literature regarding work and life is based from a conflict perspective (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). It is assumed if an individual lacks balance between work and life domains, conflict will exist. Examining work-family conflict is a way to assess the work-life balance of GAs and supervisors; it was hypothesized that supervisors would have a higher level of work-family conflict than GAs. The investigation found that although GAs had a slightly lower level of work-family conflict than did their supervisors, the results were not statistically different. The findings indicate that both GAs and supervisors felt their work does interfere with family. The demographics of GAs and supervisors suggest that GAs (96.4%) were single and had no children (89.3 %), while supervisors (55.0 %) were married and almost half (45.0%) had at least one or more children under the age of 18 in the home. Regardless of family structure, both GAs and supervisors experienced conflict, with supervisors rating slightly higher. This is important because supervisors in sport organizations may feel a higher sense of stress and pressure than GAs because typically, supervisors are the ones in charge of their respective departments, thus impacting their work-family conflict and job satisfaction levels.

As hypothesized, the overall job satisfaction levels of GAs were lower than supervisors. When comparing these two groups on job satisfaction, significant ($p < .05$) differences were found between the level of job (GA vs. supervisor) and their job satisfaction. Despite the difference, the results indicate that both GAs and supervisors are generally satisfied with their job, but supervisors are “more satisfied”. This is consistent with Parks and Parra (1994) study on job satisfaction in sport management alumnae. They found that alumnae in sport professions and those in careers not involved with sport were both generally satisfied with their jobs. Another possible explanation of the difference could be that a GA is still new to the field with little experience and may be in a position that does not suit them the best. Similarly, as a GA, they may not have much responsibility, be subject to low level or simplified tasks, have unclear tasks/ roles, or have little autonomy, all of which may impact job satisfaction.

Dixon and Warner (2010) reported personal life balance to be an important job consideration usually associated with dissatisfaction. Findings indicate that supervisors have been in the sport industry for nearly 14 years ($M = 13.63$ years). Kim and Cunningham (2005) emphasized that work experience and organizational support contributed to job satisfaction, suggesting supervisors may have had enough time to settle in the sport industry, and due to more experiences in the field, they have a realistic expectation of the job demands presented in sport, which does not largely impact their job satisfaction. This could differ for GAs whose length in their current GA position at their respective organizations was less than a year ($M = 9.58$ months) and typically only stay 12-24 months. Allen, Herst, Burck, and

Sutton (2000) proposed that the relationship between work-family conflict and job and life satisfaction reflects individuals' greater desire for balance and a feeling of dissatisfaction is present when that balance is not in place. Although GAs work-family conflict was lower than supervisors, conflict was in fact present, signifying a lack of balance. This could be one explanation for why GAs job satisfaction was lower than their supervisors.

Work-extracurricular conflict was a new construct introduced in the chapter. Extracurricular includes spiritual, hobbies, exercise/health, school, and social activities. Work-family conflict research has overlooked a large section of the population, those without family. Thus the work-extracurricular conflict variable reaches both those with and without family. Also, there may be more influencing job satisfaction than just potential conflict with family; graduate students have to juggle classes and social lives, which may be a point of conflict. We hypothesized GAs would have higher levels of work-extracurricular conflict than supervisors. Results indicated GAs and supervisors showed no statistical difference in the level of work-extracurricular conflict; however, both GAs and supervisors have difficulties completing their extracurricular responsibilities due to their job demands. This could suggest that organizations may need to be aware of this area of conflict.

GAs and supervisors report to be satisfied with their lives overall. This is consistent with Kossek and Ozeki (1998) who reported the relationship between work-family conflict and life satisfaction to be negative and fairly strong. These results could suggest that although there is a presence of conflict and therefore a lack of balance in both GAs and supervisors lives, it is not large enough, or possibly is the reality of the industry, thus not impacting the overall life satisfaction of GAs and supervisors at this point in time.

In attempting to understand GAs' perspective on future conflict when in a full time position, GAs reported a low rating which indicates that GAs do not expect their work-extracurricular conflict to improve when entering the field full-time. This suggests that GAs are aware of the industry lifestyle and accepting of it. Both GAs and supervisors had the same mean responses for work-extracurricular conflict ($M = 4.64$), so perhaps it will remain about the same. Although both groups have difficulties managing their work and extracurricular demands, it is possible the GAs have not worked in the sport industry long enough to know exactly what to expect at the next level of their career.

The findings presented in the chapter suggest there are no statistical differences between GAs' and supervisors' work-family conflict, work-extracurricular conflict, and life satisfaction levels; with a significant difference in their job satisfaction levels. The results propose that despite small differences, conflict existed in the lives of the participants, and suggested that GAs and supervisors in sport struggle to balance their work and family responsibilities as well as their work and extracurricular activities. Introducing work-extracurricular conflict as a new variable when studying work-life balance, and investigating the work-life balance of GAs in sport, provides a foundation for future research.

Implications

A significant issue for college athletic departments is the retention of its staff "in preventing undesirable employee turnover, maintaining a consistency in work flow, and avoiding the high costs associated with new employee recruitment and training" (Inglis, Danylchuk, & Pastore, 1996, p. 237). Work-extracurricular conflict is an area that may need

to be considered by administrators, when understanding their employees' balance. This conflict may impact employee satisfaction and affect some staff more than work-family conflict.

It is crucial supervisors understand the work-life balance of GAs, as they can take action in helping keep these educated and experienced future sport managers in the industry long-term. This organizational culture and support is often found to be critical (e.g., Bruening et al., 2008; Dixon et al., 2008).

For example, if a supervisor is aware that his/her GA is struggling to manage the workload of the GA position with school, the supervisor could give some of the work responsibility to another individual, or may work with the GA to schedule tutoring sessions to help with schoolwork. Also, supervisors can open an honest line of communication with their GAs about the pros and cons presented when working in sport. This communication is necessary for preparing GAs for a career in sport. If supervisors do not know of the struggles GAs have, the sport industry risks losing GAs long-term. Many universities have work-life initiatives aimed at helping staff manage their work load and life (i.e., flextime, childcare, fitness programs; Bruening et al., 2008; Dixon et al., 2007). However, these policies may neglect GAs. This chapter sheds light on an untouched population, and if supervisors are aware of GAs work-life balance, this could potentially be brought to the university's attention. Organizations taking a broader look at their work-life effort, to reach GAs, may also assist in retaining this population in the sport industry long-term.

Limitations and Future Research

This was an initial examination of a new construct, work-extracurricular conflict, but the sample size is a limitation of the chapter. Expanding the research to include GAs and supervisors from universities nationwide or looking at GAs' work-life balance at different levels (i.e., Division I, II, and III) would produce more valid and generalizable results. Another limitation is the timing of the data collection during the quiet summer months when the balance may have been easier and/or GAs may have been new to the job.

Upcoming research should further examine the population of GAs because they are the sport managers of tomorrow and keeping these valuable employees in the industry long-term is vital.

Research shows that intention-to-leave an organization and search for another job is positively related to work-family conflict (Burke, 1988). Therefore, if GAs show a lack of balance in their lives because of their position and believe this imbalance will remain once they enter the field full-time, the sport industry risks losing qualified and experienced sport professionals. It is imperative that managers pay attention to the workload and overall demands presented to GAs from school and work.

Communicating the realities of work-life balance in the sport profession, from the supervisors' point of view, could be helpful in aligning GAs expectation when obtaining a position in sport full-time. Researchers could also investigate the new variable of work-extracurricular conflict. This chapter concluded that both GAs and supervisors had WEC conflict, thus presenting an area of further research in the sports field. Additional research on this factor may help in the implementation of work policies for sport professionals without family.

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